

## Message Text

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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY  
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S E C R E T STATE 168556

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 598 - JULY 3, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING  
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY  
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

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DEPEND ON THE ISRAELI REACTION TO EGYPT'S NEW PROPOSALS WHICH ARE TO BE PASSED TO ISRAEL VIA US GOOD OFFICES.  
(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

8. LEBANON. SYRIAN-CHRISTIAN FIGHTING INTERRUPTED FOR THE SECOND STRAIGHT DAY IN BEIRUT YESTERDAY. THE CLASHES -- HEAVIER THAN THE PRECEDING DAY -- APPARENTLY BEGAN IN THE PORT AREA AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND THEREAFTER QUICKLY SPREAD TO OTHER AREAS OF EAST BEIRUT, INCLUDING AYN RUMMANEH. THE NEW FIGHTING, IN WHICH SYRIAN ARTILLERY AND ROCKETS HEAVILY POUNDED CHRISTIAN AREAS, APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN SPARKED BY TWO INCIDENTS AT MIDDAY, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY BEIRUT, IN WHICH FOUR SYRIANS WERE APPARENTLY KIDNAPPED BY PHALANGISTS IN THE PORT AREA AND SYRIAN TROOPS AND PHALANGISTS CLASHED AT A ROADBLOCK IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA.

9. AS THE FIGHTING CONTINUED, THE SYRIANS SEEM TO HAVE TARGETED KEY CHRISTIAN INSTALLATIONS. SHAMOUNIST HEAD-QUARTERS CAME UNDER HEAVY BOMBARDMENT, AS APPARENTLY DID THE PHALANGE'S MAIN POLITICAL OFFICES. THE CLANDESTINE  
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PHALANGE RADIO STOPPED TRANSMITTING ABRUPTLY, AND WAS SAID BY PRESS ACCOUNTS TO HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OUT BY SYRIAN ARTILLERY. ANOTHER CEASEFIRE WAS ARRANGED BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT FIGHTING CONTINUED INTO THE LATE EVENING.

BEIRUT RADIO SAID AT MIDNIGHT THAT ASSAD, AFTER A PHONE CONVERSATION WITH SARKIS, HAD ORDERED SYRIAN FORCES TO CEASE FIRING IMMEDIATELY.

10. THE FIGHTING BETWEEN SYRIAN PEACEKEEPING FORCES AND RIGHTWING LEBANESE CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN IN EASTERN BEIRUT THIS WEEKEND CAN ONLY FURTHER AGGRAVATE ALREADY STRAINED SYRIAN-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS. INDEED, A MORE INTENSE CYCLE OF REPRISALS AND COUNTER-REPRISALS IS A VIRTUAL CERTAINTY OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

11. THE FIGHTING BEGAN ON SATURDAY, APPARENTLY WHEN CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN PROVOKED THE SYRIANS, WHO RESPONDED WITH ARTILLERY AND MORTAR FIRE. THE CHRISTIANS HAD EARLIER DECLARED A GENERAL STRIKE FOR SATURDAY TO MOURN THE MASSACRE OF CHRISTIAN VILLAGERS IN NORTHEASTERN LEBANON ON WEDNESDAY. THE CHRISTIANS BELIEVE SYRIAN TROOPS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRE.

12. CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADER BASHIR GEMAYEL WAS BRIEFLY DETAINED BY A SYRIAN UNIT ON SATURDAY AND THEN RELEASED. A CEASE-FIRE ON SUNDAY WAS LARGELY INEFFECTIVE, AND THE SYRIANS REPORTEDLY SHELLED CHRISTIAN STRONGHOLDS THIS MORNING.

13. ALTHOUGH MOST CHRISTIAN LEADERS PROBABLY WANT TO AVOID A FULL-SCALE MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE BETTER-ARMED SYRIANS, THEIR CONTROL OVER THE MILITIAMEN IS TENUOUS. EXTREMIST CHRISTIAN GROUPS MAY TRY TO PROLONG THE FIGHTING TO SPARK A MAJOR CRISIS.

14. THE SITUATION COULD BECOME EVEN MORE COMPLEX AND  
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DANGEROUS IF THE FIGHTING SHOULD SPREAD TO INCLUDE MUSLIM AND PALESTINIAN FORCES IN WESTERN BEIRUT. THESE FORCES HAVE AVOIDED SIGNIFICANT INVOLVEMENT IN PREVIOUS SYRIAN-CHRISTIAN CLASHES.

15. SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD PROBABLY WANTS TO PREVENT A MAJOR CRISIS FROM DEVELOPING WITH THE CHRISTIANS, BUT LOCAL SYRIAN COMMANDERS HAVE OVERREACTED TO CHRISTIAN ATTACKS IN THE PAST AND MAY DO SO AGAIN. SYRIAN FORCES IN THE BEIRUT AREA, ANTICIPATING A NEW OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING, HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENING THEIR POSITIONS IN CHRISTIAN EAST BEIRUT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. SYRIAN UNITS HAVE ALSO MOVED INTO KEY POSITIONS ON ROADS RUNNING INTO BEIRUT FROM OUTLYING CHRISTIAN STRONGHOLDS.

16. THEN, TOO, THERE IS THE ROLE OF ASSAD'S BROTHER RIFAAT. IT IS BECOMING MORE EVIDENT THAT SYRIANS WERE INVOLVED IN THE JUNE 28 BEKAA INCIDENT. IF RIFAAT ORDERED

THE RAIDS, HE PROBABLY DID SO IN RESPONSE TO THE MURDER OF HIS CLOSE FRIEND, TONY FRANJIYAH. WHETHER HE COORDINATED THE ATTACK WITH FRANJIYAH'S FOLLOWERS REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION. WE DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD COULD HAVE RESTRAINED HIS BROTHER FROM SUCH A LIMITED ACTION, ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE ABLE TO KEEP RIFAAT FROM INVOLVING HIMSELF MORE DEEPLY IN THE PHALANGE-FRANJIYAH FEUD.

17. ADDING TO THE DETERIORATING ATMOSPHERE IN CHRISTIAN LEBANON AND BEIRUT IS THE EXPIRATION OF THE JUNE 30 DEADLINE IN THE ELDER FRANJIYAH'S ULTIMATUM TO THE PHALANGE TO QUIT HIS STRONGHOLD IN THE NORTH. WHEN THE EXPECTED ROUND OF FRANJIYAH REPRISALS AND PHALANGE COUNTERACTIONS BEGINS, THE ATTITUDE OF THE SYRIANS WILL BECOME CRUCIAL.

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18. IT IS PROBABLE THAT, IN THE EARLY GOING, THE SYRIANS WILL STAND ASIDE WHILE FRANJIYAH SUPPORTERS AND THE PHALANGE GO AFTER EACH OTHER. A SYRIAN POSTURE OF NON-INVOLVEMENT WOULD:

(A) ALLOW THEIR FRIENDS, THE FRANJIYAHS, TO EXACT RETRIBUTION LARGELY UNIMPEDED.

(B) AVOID SYRIAN CASUALTIES WERE THEY TO GET CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE;

(C) ALLOW THEM TO INTERVENE AT A TIME OF THEIR CHOOSING IF THE SITUATION DETERIORATED TOO RAPIDLY AND IF THE PHALANGE-FRANJIYAH FIGHTING BECAME WIDESPREAD.

19. THE BEKAA INCIDENT, HOWEVER, COMPLICATES THE SYRIAN POSITION, GIVEN THE PHALANGE CONVICTION THAT SYRIANS PERPETRATED THE RAIDS. THUS, THE PROSPECTS FOR BROADER FIGHTING BETWEEN THE PHALANGE AND THE SYRIANS HAVE INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. THE MILITARY SUPERIORITY OF THE SYRIANS WOULD ACT AS A DETERRING FACTOR IN PHALANGE CALCULATIONS, BUT BASHIR GEMAYEL IS ENOUGH OF A HOTHEAD -- AND HAS CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE IN HIS 10,000-12,000-STRONG MILITARY FORCE -- TO RISK A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADF.

20. IN SUM, CONTRARY TO PRESIDENT ASSAD'S DESIRE TO COOL THE SITUATION, THE SYRIAN FORCES HAVE BECOME MUCH LESS OF A STABILIZING FACTOR IN THE LEBANESE POLITICAL EQUATION. INDEED, RIFAAT'S ACTIONS SEEM TO HAVE TURNED THEM INTO ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FEUDING. (CONFIDENTIAL)

21. PDRY. ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS YESTERDAY "FROZE" POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PDRY BECAUSE OF ADEN'S HAND IN THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF YAR'S PRESIDENT. SIXTEEN OF THE TWENTY-THREE ARAB LEAGUE

MEMBERS FAVORED THE RESOLUTION; THE OTHERS -- IRAQ,  
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SYRIA, LIBYA, ALGERIA, THE PLO, AND DJBOUTI -- DID NOT ATTEND. YAR FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAG SAID THAT IRAQ AND SYRIA SUPPORTED THE ACTION. THE ARAB LEAGUE CHARTER PREVENTS THE BREAKING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH A MEMBER STATE UNLESS ALL BUT THE OFFENDING STATE VOTE FOR SUCH A MOVE. THE CHARTER ALSO STIPULATES THAT DECISIONS ARE BINDING ONLY ON MEMBERS WHO VOTED IN FAVOR OF THEM. THE LEAGUE'S ACTION SHOULD CAUSE PDYR CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP.

22. NEVERTHELESS, NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT SOUTH YEMEN'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS TOWARD SANA. AT THE SAME TIME, MANY OF THEM APPEAR INCLINED TOWARD SOME DRAMATIC MOVE OF THEIR OWN AGAINST THE SOUTH TO AVENGE PRESIDENT GHASHMI'S DEATH, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT YET CLEAR THAT THIS ANGRY MOOD WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION.

23. NORTH YEMEN APPEARS GENERALLY STABLE UNDER THE NEW FOUR-MAN PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL THAT TOOK POWER FOLLOWING GHASHMI'S ASSASSINATION. THE NEW LEADERS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE MAJORITY OF NORTH YEMEN'S DIVERSE POPULATION, ALTHOUGH AN UPSURGE OF MANEUVERING FOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IS UNDER WAY.

24. MANY NORTH YEMENIS ARE CONVINCED THAT A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADEN REGIME IS INEVITABLE. OFFICIALS IN SANA HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THEY ARE CONSIDERING, PERHAPS EVEN PLANNING, RETALIATION AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN FOR THE KILLING OF GHASHMI. THE NORTH YEMENIS ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD SEEK SAUDI HELP FOR ANY MILITARY MOVE, ALTHOUGH THE SAUDIS RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES AND RISKS INVOLVED IN SUCH A VENTURE AND WOULD PROBABLY CAUTION RESTRAINT.

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25. DESPITE THEIR MOOD, IT IS QUESTIONABLE THAT THE NORTH YEMENIS WOULD NOW INITIATE A RETALIATORY OPERATION AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN. TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL REMAIN HIGH, HOWEVER, AND AN UPSURGE OF CLASHES ALONG THE BORDER BETWEEN IRREGULARS CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

26. NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS ALSO ARE EXPRESSING INCREASED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE SOVIET MACHINATIONS AGAINST THEM IN LIGHT OF MOSCOW'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ADEN REGIME; SOME OFFICIALS HAVE STATED FLATLY THAT THE SOVIETS MUST NOW BE "EXPOSED" AND THROWN OUT OF NORTH YEMEN.

27. IN RECENT YEARS THE NORTH YEMENIS HAVE TRIED TO  
BALANCE THEIR RELATIONS WITH BOTH EAST AND WEST. THEY  
RECEIVE SOME MILITARY SUPPLIES FROM THE SOVIETS, AND ABOUT  
100 SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS ARE IN THE COUNTRY. WHILE  
WE ARE UNCERTAIN WHAT ACTION NORTH YEMEN MIGHT TAKE AGAINST  
THE USSR. SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO THE YEMENI MILITARY IS  
IMPORTANT AND MAY MILITATE AGAINST A COMPLETE BREAK WITH  
MOSCOW. NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS HAVE REMINDED US OFFICIALS  
THAT THEY ARE LOOKING TO WASHINGTON FOR HELP IN COUNTERING  
SOVIET AND SOUTH YEMENI MOVES IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

28. WHILE DEALING WITH THESE ISSUES, NORTH YEMEN'S NEW  
LEADERSHIP GROUP MUST ALSO COPE WITH DOMESTIC PRESSURE  
FROM PROMINENT TRIBAL AND LEFTIST OPPORTUNISTS WHO ARE  
SEEKING INFLUENTIAL POSTS IN GOVERNMENT. BARRING ANOTHER  
DRAMATIC UPHEAVAL IN THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER, THE SANA REGIME  
SEEMS LIKELY TO MAINTAIN ITS GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE  
ORIENTATION. SAUDI ARABIA, MOREOVER, WILL USE ITS INFLU-  
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COMPATIBLE LEADERSHIP. (SECRET/NOFORN) VANCE

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DRAFTED BY:D M WINN

APPROVED BY: J W TWINAM

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S E C R E T STATE 168556

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16. THEN, TOO, THERE IS THE ROLE OF ASSAD'S BROTHER  
RIFAAT. IT IS BECOMING MORE EVIDENT THAT SYRIANS WERE  
INVOLVED IN THE JUNE 28 BEKAA INCIDENT. IF RIFAAT ORDERED  
THE RAIDS, HE PROBABLY DID SO IN RESPONSE TO THE MURDER

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OF HIS CLOSE FRIEND, TONY FRANJIYAH. WHETHER HE COORDINATED THE ATTACK WITH FRANJIYAH'S FOLLOWERS REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION. WE DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT ASSAD COULD HAVE RESTRAINED HIS BROTHER FROM SUCH A LIMITED ACTION, ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE ABLE TO KEEP RIFAAT FROM INVOLVING HIMSELF MORE DEEPLY IN THE PHALANGE-FRANJIYAH FEUD.

17. ADDING TO THE DETERIORATING ATMOSPHERE IN CHRISTIAN LEBANON AND BEIRUT IS THE EXPIRATION OF THE JUNE 30 DEADLINE IN THE ELDER FRANJIYAH'S ULTIMATUM TO THE PHALANGE TO QUIT HIS STRONGHOLD IN THE NORTH. WHEN THE EXPECTED ROUND OF FRANJIYAH REPRISALS AND PHALANGE COUNTERACTIONS BEGINS, THE ATTITUDE OF THE SYRIANS WILL BECOME CRUCIAL.

18. IT IS PROBABLE THAT, IN THE EARLY GOING, THE SYRIANS WILL STAND ASIDE WHILE FRANJIYAH SUPPORTERS AND THE PHALANGE GO AFTER EACH OTHER. A SYRIAN POSTURE OF NON-INVOLVEMENT WOULD:

(A) ALLOW THEIR FRIENDS, THE FRANJIYAHS, TO EXACT RETRIBUTION LARGELY UNIMPEDED.

(B) AVOID SYRIAN CASUALTIES WERE THEY TO GET CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE;

(C) ALLOW THEM TO INTERVENE AT A TIME OF THEIR CHOOSING IF THE SITUATION DETERIORATED TOO RAPIDLY AND IF THE PHALANGE-FRANJIYAH FIGHTING BECAME WIDESPREAD.

19. THE BEKAA INCIDENT, HOWEVER, COMPLICATES THE SYRIAN POSITION, GIVEN THE PHALANGE CONVICTION THAT SYRIANS PERPETRATED THE RAIDS. THUS, THE PROSPECTS FOR BROADER FIGHTING BETWEEN THE PHALANGE AND THE SYRIANS HAVE  
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INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. THE MILITARY SUPERIORITY OF THE SYRIANS WOULD ACT AS A DETERRING FACTOR IN PHALANGE CALCULATIONS, BUT BASHIR GEMAYEL IS ENOUGH OF A HOTHEAD -- AND HAS CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE IN HIS 10,000-12,000-STRONG MILITARY FORCE -- TO RISK A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADF.

20. IN SUM, CONTRARY TO PRESIDENT ASSAD'S DESIRE TO COOL THE SITUATION, THE SYRIAN FORCES HAVE BECOME MUCH LESS OF A STABILIZING FACTOR IN THE LEBANESE POLITICAL EQUATION. INDEED, RIFAAT'S ACTIONS SEEM TO HAVE TURNED THEM INTO ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE FEUDING. (CONFIDENTIAL)

21. PDRY. ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS YESTERDAY "FROZE"

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PDRY BECAUSE OF ADEN'S HAND IN THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF YAR'S PRESIDENT. SIXTEEN OF THE TWENTY-THREE ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERS FAVORED THE RESOLUTION; THE OTHERS -- IRAQ, SYRIA, LIBYA, ALGERIA, THE PLO, AND DJBOUTI -- DID NOT ATTEND. YAR FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAG SAID THAT IRAQ AND SYRIA SUPPORTED THE ACTION. THE ARAB LEAGUE CHARTER PREVENTS THE BREAKING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH A MEMBER STATE UNLESS ALL BUT THE OFFENDING STATE VOTE FOR SUCH A MOVE. THE CHARTER ALSO STIPULATES THAT DECISIONS ARE BINDING ONLY ON MEMBERS WHO VOTED IN FAVOR OF THEM. THE LEAGUE'S ACTION SHOULD CAUSE PDRY CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP.

22. NEVERTHELESS, NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT SOUTH YEMEN'S ULTIMATE INTENTIONS TOWARD SANA. AT THE SAME TIME, MANY OF THEM APPEAR INCLINED TOWARD SOME DRAMATIC MOVE OF THEIR OWN AGAINST THE SOUTH TO AVENGE PRESIDENT GHASHMI'S DEATH, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT YET CLEAR THAT THIS ANGRY MOOD WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION.

23. NORTH YEMEN APPEARS GENERALLY STABLE UNDER THE NEW FOUR-MAN PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL THAT TOOK POWER FOLLOWING  
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GHASHMI'S ASSASSINATION. THE NEW LEADERS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE MAJORITY OF NORTH YEMEN'S DIVERSE POPULATION, ALTHOUGH AN UPSURGE OF MANEUVERING FOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IS UNDER WAY.

24. MANY NORTH YEMENIS ARE CONVINCED THAT A CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADEN REGIME IS INEVITABLE. OFFICIALS IN SANA HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THEY ARE CONSIDERING, PERHAPS EVEN PLANNING, RETALIATION AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN FOR THE KILLING OF GHASHMI. THE NORTH YEMENIS ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD SEEK SAUDI HELP FOR ANY MILITARY MOVE, ALTHOUGH THE SAUDIS RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES AND RISKS INVOLVED IN SUCH A VENTURE AND WOULD PROBABLY CAUTION RESTRAINT.

25. DESPITE THEIR MOOD, IT IS QUESTIONABLE THAT THE NORTH YEMENIS WOULD NOW INITIATE A RETALIATORY OPERATION AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN. TENSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL REMAIN HIGH, HOWEVER, AND AN UPSURGE OF CLASHES ALONG THE BORDER BETWEEN IRREGULARS CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

26. NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS ALSO ARE EXPRESSING INCREASED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE SOVIET MACHINATIONS AGAINST THEM IN LIGHT OF MOSCOW'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ADEN REGIME; SOME OFFICIALS HAVE STATED FLATLY THAT THE SOVIETS MUST NOW BE "EXPOSED" AND THROWN OUT OF NORTH YEMEN.

27. IN RECENT YEARS THE NORTH YEMENIS HAVE TRIED TO

BALANCE THEIR RELATIONS WITH BOTH EAST AND WEST. THEY  
RECEIVE SOME MILITARY SUPPLIES FROM THE SOVIETS, AND ABOUT  
100 SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS ARE IN THE COUNTRY. WHILE  
WE ARE UNCERTAIN WHAT ACTION NORTH YEMEN MIGHT TAKE AGAINST  
THE USSR. SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO THE YEMENI MILITARY IS  
IMPORTANT AND MAY MILITATE AGAINST A COMPLETE BREAK WITH  
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MOSCOW. NORTH YEMENI OFFICIALS HAVE REMINDED US OFFICIALS  
THAT THEY ARE LOOKING TO WASHINGTON FOR HELP IN COUNTERING  
SOVIET AND SOUTH YEMENI MOVES IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

28. WHILE DEALING WITH THESE ISSUES, NORTH YEMEN'S NEW  
LEADERSHIP GROUP MUST ALSO COPE WITH DOMESTIC PRESSURE  
FROM PROMINENT TRIBAL AND LEFTIST OPPORTUNISTS WHO ARE  
SEEKING INFLUENTIAL POSTS IN GOVERNMENT. BARRING ANOTHER  
DRAMATIC UPHEAVAL IN THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER, THE SANA REGIME  
SEEMS LIKELY TO MAINTAIN ITS GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE  
ORIENTATION. SAUDI ARABIA, MOREOVER, WILL USE ITS INFLU-  
ENCE IN NORTH YEMEN TO ENSURE THE CONTINUATION OF A  
COMPATIBLE LEADERSHIP. (SECRET/NOFORN) VANCE  
UNQUOTE VANCE

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